History 4440-001, African-American History to 1877
Fall 2016
M/W 2:00-3:20, CHEM 352

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Course Description/ Course Goals
This course will survey the major historical events in African American history from the origins of slavery in North America through the end of the Civil War. Students are encouraged to enroll in the second half of the course, which is offered in the spring semester and will begin with the Reconstruction period.

Themes addressed in the course will include: the creation of an African American identity, African cultural continuity and transformation, the construction of race in the context of the U.S., the relationship of people of African descent to American political and social institutions, black resistance, white oppression, the impact of gender on the black historical experience, African American cultural expression, and black community life in both slave and free communities in the North and in the South. We will also discuss the history of the field of African American history and endeavor to understand how a deep understanding of black history has altered and shaped broader narratives of American history. Furthermore, we will contemplate the historical memory of slavery as it is represented in popular culture and in ongoing discussions about the issue of reparations.

By the end of the semester, students should possess not only a broad familiarity with the experiences of African Americans during the time period but should also possess a more sophisticated understanding of how to interpret both primary sources and historiographical texts.

Class Format
The ethos of the class will be participatory and collaborative. My role as an instructor is to guide you through the process of gathering and analyzing information, not merely to dispense historical data and ask you to memorize it. Students are expected to come to class having read the material and ready to listen actively and to participate in discussions. The class will consist of lectures, discussions, and documentary screenings.

Required Texts
Thomas C. Holt and Elsa Barkley Brown, Major Problems in African-American History, Volume 1
Henry Louis Gates, Jr. editor, The Classic Slave Narratives
Solomon Northup, Twelve Years a Slave

Additional Readings to be posted on Blackboard

Grades and Assignments
- Four tests, 50 points each—200 points
- Five reading/viewing quizzes, 20 points each—100 points
- Final Paper —100 points
- 400 points total
Final Grades:
- 360-400 = A
- 320-359 = B
- 280-319 = C
- 240-279 = D

**Tests:** There will be four short tests during the course of the semester. Each is worth 50 points for 200 points total. There will also be five short reading and/or quizzes worth 10 points each for 50 points total. Please see the schedule for specific dates. During the class period before each test, I will give you some clues about what you should review to prepare for the test. The tests will cover the lectures, the films we watch in class, and the reading assignments. The tests will consist of essay questions, short answer questions, and objective questions.

**Final paper:** The final paper will serve as your final examination. It will be analytical in nature and will ask you to synthesize the broad array of materials we will encounter in class. You will write a 5-7 page essay synthesizing what you have learned about African-American history organized around one of the following set of themes:

1) resistance and cooperation
2) identity and gender
3) culture and community
4) labor and economics

More specific guidelines will be distributed later in the term.

**Attendance and Missed Tests and Quizzes**
I do not take attendance. However, that does not mean that I consider class attendance to be optional. Although we will be doing a great deal of reading this semester, this course does not have a single “textbook.” Lecture material is not duplicated in the readings. I will not post lecture content on Blackboard. You must attend regularly if you wish to succeed.

I will give students the opportunity to make up for missed tests and quizzes only if arrangements are made in advance and proper documentation explaining your absence is provided. Do not come to me after a missed test or quiz and ask to make it up. Out of fairness to the other students, my answer at that point will be “no.” Please note that I do not consider car problems, broken alarm clocks, or appointments scheduled during class time to be excused absences. If a circumstance out of your control arises, please contact me to make arrangements and explain your absence before class begins. Things like serious illness (documented with a doctor’s note), funerals (also well-documented), and officially sanctioned UNT absences (for athletics, etc.) will be excused. If you have a question about whether or not an absence will be excused, please see me before you miss class. I will always be better able to accommodate you before you miss a scheduled test or quiz than after the fact. The only time I will make an exception to the before class rule will be in the case of an extreme and unanticipated emergencies (such as a medical crisis that takes place during class time).

I will not accept the take home final exam after its due date of, Monday, December 12 at 3:30pm/

**How to Reach Me**
Please always feel free to come and see me during my office hours if you have any comments, questions, or concerns. E-mail is the best way to reach me outside of class or my office hours. Please also feel free to contact Shaffer Bonewell via email or during his office hours.
**Academic Honesty**

Students are expected to strictly adhere to the UNT Student Code of Conduct, which prohibits lying, cheating, and plagiarism. Academic dishonesty will result in a failing grade for an assignment on the first offense. The second offense will result in failure of the course.

While writing the final paper, please be particularly careful to avoid plagiarism—taking credit for another person’s intellectual property without giving her proper credit.

The American Historical Association’s “Statement on Professional Conduct” defines plagiarism in the following way:

“The word *plagiarism* derives from Latin roots: *plagiarius*, an abductor, and *plagiare*, to steal. **The expropriation of another author’s work, and the presentation of it as one’s own, constitutes plagiarism and is a serious violation of the ethics of scholarship.** It seriously undermines the credibility of the plagiarist, and can do irreparable harm to a historian’s career.

In addition to the harm that plagiarism does to the pursuit of truth, it can also be an offense against the literary rights of the original author and the property rights of the copyright owner... **The real penalty for plagiarism is the abhorrence of the community of scholars.**

Plagiarism includes more subtle abuses than simply expropriating the exact wording of another author without attribution. Plagiarism can also include the limited borrowing, without sufficient attribution, of another person’s distinctive and significant research findings or interpretations. Of course, historical knowledge is cumulative, and thus in some contexts—such as textbooks, encyclopedia articles, broad syntheses, and certain forms of public presentation—the form of attribution, and the permissible extent of dependence on prior scholarship, citation, and other forms of attribution will differ from what is expected in more limited monographs. As knowledge is disseminated to a wide public, it loses some of its personal reference. What belongs to whom becomes less distinct. But even in textbooks a historian should acknowledge the sources of recent or distinctive findings and interpretations, those not yet a part of the common understanding of the profession. Similarly, while some forms of historical work do not lend themselves to explicit attribution (e.g., films and exhibitions), every effort should be made to give due credit to scholarship informing such work.

Plagiarism, then, takes many forms. The clearest abuse is the use of another’s language without quotation marks and citation. More subtle abuses include the appropriation of concepts, data, or notes all disguised in newly crafted sentences, or reference to a borrowed work in an early note and then extensive further use without subsequent attribution. Borrowing unexamined primary source references from a secondary work without citing that work is likewise inappropriate. All such tactics reflect an unworthy disregard for the contributions of others.

No matter what the context, **the best professional practice for avoiding a charge of plagiarism is always to be explicit, thorough, and generous in acknowledging one’s intellectual debts.**”

(See: [http://www.historians.org/pubs/free/professionalstandards.cfm#Plagiarism](http://www.historians.org/pubs/free/professionalstandards.cfm#Plagiarism))

If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism while you are in the process of writing your final paper, see me.

***Please note:*** Copying even a few sentences from the Internet and presenting them as your own work constitutes plagiarism.***
Special Needs
The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at http://www.unt.edu/oda. You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

For information about resources available to help you succeed at UNT see:
www.succeed.unt.edu

Schedule

Please note: This schedule is subject to change. You are expected to attend class regularly and to be aware of any changes that may be made.

You should pace yourself with the reading assignments. Some reading assignments are longer than others and should be begun well in advance of the day they are due. Longer reading assignments are marked with two stars (**) on the syllabus.

Week 1, Introduction/ African Origins and the Transatlantic Slave Trade
August 29— Introduction to the course; How to Analyze a Primary Source
August 31— Lecture: The Transatlantic Slave Trade; Reading/ Discussion: Major Problems, pp. 44-49

Week 2, Case Study of Olaudah Equiano
September 5— No Class Labor Day
September 7 — Lecture: Equiano’s Life Story and the Art of Historical Interpretation
Reading/ Discussion: Major Problems, pp. 49-50

Week 3, Impact of the Slave Trade on African Societies/ Origins of Slavery in North America
September 12 — Reading/ Discussion: Major Problems, pp. 52-80
Reading Quiz #1

September 14-- Lecture: Establishing Slavery; Reading/ Discussion: Major Problems, pp. 92-98

Week 4; “Generations” of Slavery / Test #1
September 19— Lecture: Ira Berlin’s Slave Generations; Reading/ Discussion: Major Problems pp.113-115

September 21-- Test #1

Week 5, Slavery and Abolition in the North
September 26— Lecture: Slavery and Abolition in the North/ Case Study of Phillis Wheatley
September 28— Film: Traces of the Trade: A Story from Deep North
Week 6, Reparations and the Memory of Slavery/ Historiography of Slavery
October 3-- Reading/ Discussion: Ta-Nahesi Coats, “The Case for Reparations,” posted on Blackboard

October 5 — Lecture: Historiography of Slavery
Reading/ Discussion: Excerpts from classic studies of American slavery posted on Blackboard
Please be prepared to summarize briefly each excerpt during our class discussion.

Week 7, Sally Hemings, Thomas Jefferson, and the Writing of History/ Test #2
October 10-- Lecture: Sally Hemings and Thomas Jefferson and the Writing of History
Reading/ Discussion: Primary sources concerning Hemings & Jefferson posted on Blackboard

October 12- Test #2

Week 8, Religious Observance in Free and Slave Communities/ Folktales and Expressive Culture
October 17-- Lecture: African-American Religious Experiences in Free and Slave Communities
Reading/ Discussion: Major Problems, pp. 140-156

October 19 — Reading/ Discussion: Major Problems, pp. 277-292; 259-260
Reading Quiz #2

Week 9: The Family Life and Labors of Enslaved People / The Case Study of Frederick Douglass
October 24-- Lecture: The Family Life and Labors of Enslaved People
Reading/ Discussion: Major Problems, pp. 250-255; pp. 234-244

October 26---- Discussion: Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass (in Gates The Classic Slave Narratives)**
Reading Quiz #3

Lecture:
Week 10: Test #3/ Slave Resistance and Rebellion
October 31— Slave Resistance and the Case Study of Nat Turner
Reading/ Discussion: Major Problems, pp. 127, 163, 246-250

November 2—Review/ Catch up Session

Week 11: Test #3/ The Case Study of Solomon Northup
November 7— Test #3

November 9- Film: 12 Years a Slave
Reading: Twelve Years a Slave**

Week 12: Slavery in History and Popular Memory
November 14—Film: 12 Years a Slave

November 16-- Reading/ Discussion: “Film Roundtable: 12 Years a Slave” and Noah Berlatsky, “How 12 Years a Slave Gets History Right by Getting it Wrong” to be posted to Blackboard
Reading/ Viewing Quiz #4

Week 13, The Abolitionist Movement
November 21-- Lecture: The Abolitionist Movement
Read/ Discussion: Major Problems, pp. 295-30

November 23—No class.
Week 14: The Case Study of Harriet Jacobs (Linda Brent); The Civil War and Emancipation
November 28 — Discussion: Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl (in Gates The Classic Slave Narratives)**
Reading Quiz #5

November 30 — Civil War and Emancipation, Read/ Discussion: Major Problems, pp. 339, 343-356

Week 15: Test #4/ Conclusion
December 5 — Test #4

December 7 — Q&A Session: How to Succeed on the Final Paper Assignment
Please do not consider this class session to be optional. Paper grades for students who attend this class are generally much higher than for those who do not.

Final Exam:
Due by Monday, December 12 at 3:30pm. I will not accept late exams. I will not accept exams via email. Please place your exam in the container on my office door, Wooten Hall 247. Please do not slide the exams under my office door.